

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION # 16: How should I handle a “travel status” injury?



BACKGROUND:

If an employee contacts you while he or she is on travel status, and informs you that he has been injured or is ill, how will you respond?

Certainly, the immediate response would be to ensure that the employee seeks appropriate medical attention. Should you assume the illness or injury is work-related without question, and authorize medical treatment? Before you respond, consider the following misconceptions:

- Being in “travel status,” automatically qualifies someone for a CA-16, Authorization for Medical Examination and/or Treatment.
FALSE: If the employee is injured while on “travel status,” he or she may be eligible for benefits, including authorization for medical treatment, but not under all circumstances.
- Being in “travel status,” automatically gives you 24-hour coverage for injuries AND you are guaranteed entitlement.
FALSE: While it is true that coverage is extended to “24 HOUR COVERAGE,” such coverage is only extended for those activities that are incidental to the travel – i.e. injury occurs when eating, or traveling to and from the hotel. If the facts show that the employee was involved in recreational or personal errands, the claim will be denied as not being in the performance of duties.

Note: You may not stop the employee from filing a claim or impede the progress of the claim even if you suspect it will be denied by DOL.

The criteria applied by the DOL to accept a claim for a work-related injury sustained while in a travel status remains the same as the criteria applied for work-related claims for injuries sustained on the agency premises.

- The Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP) will still review the validity of a claim for injury sustained on official travel just as it would any other claim. All “Five Elements of Review” must be met:
 - a. Is the employee a civil employee as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations?
 - b. Is the claim filed timely?
 - For COP entitlement, claim must be filed within 30 days of the injury.
 - For other benefits, the claim must be filed within three years, unless the immediate supervisor had actual knowledge of the injury within 30 days of the occurrence.
 - c. Can the employee prove Fact of Injury?
 - Factual – Employee provided evidence that the injury occurred.
 - Medical – A medical diagnosis from a “qualified” physician.
 - d. Can the employee prove Performance of Duty: what they were doing at the time of injury was related to their employment?
 - e. Can the employee prove Causal Relationship: evidence that the medical condition or disability was caused by or was related to their federal employment. *Travel authorization documentation must be submitted with the claim for injury.*

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Issuance of CA-16 – [See FAQ #11.](#)
2. Traumatic Injuries – [See FAQ #11.](#)
3. Occupational Disease – [See FAQ #12.](#)

**Questions? Contact the ARC WC Specialist at (304) 480-8229
or email questions to WorkersComp@bpd.treas.gov**